



*The story of*  
**THE TENTH  
BATTALION**



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*The*  
STORY OF THE  
TENTH CANADIAN  
BATTALION

1914 - 1917

By  
J. A. HOLLAND.

(This series of histories is written under the direction of and edited by Capt. T. G. ROBERTS of the Canadian War Records Office.)

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Lieut.-Col, R. H. BOYLE.

# *The* Story of the 10th Battalion.

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## COMMANDING OFFICERS.

Lieut.-Col. R. L. BOYLE,

29th September, 1914, to 25th April, 1915.

Capt. G. C. ARTHUR (temporary),

24th April, 1915, to 6th May, 1915.

Major P. C. GUTHRIE (temporary),

6th May, 1915, to 25th May, 1915.

Lieut.-Col. J. G. RATTRAY, D.S.O.

Lieut.-Col. D. M. ORMOND, D.S.O., M.C. (now Brig.-Gen.),  
25th September, 1915.

Major E. W. MacDONALD, D.S.O., M.C. (now Lieut.-Col.),  
24th April, 1918.

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## ENGAGEMENTS.

Second Battle of Ypres, Festubert, Givenchy, Sanctuary Wood,  
The Somme, Hill 70, Vimy Ridge, Passchendaele.

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FOR various reasons this history of the 10th Canadian Infantry Battalion must necessarily be a brief one. Records of the battalion's early exploits in Flanders are fragmentary and incomplete. Many noteworthy achievements now find place only in the memories of the pitifully few surviving "Originals." However, all those splendid deeds of courage, endurance and fortitude upon which the solid reputation of the battalion rests are dealt with as fully as possible. Unfortunately, individual acts of gallantry, for which the "Tenth" was conspicuous, even among the hosts of the bravest, cannot be given the prominence which they so well merit. The moment has not yet arrived for the publication of a more detailed and complete history.

## MOBILIZATION.

Parliamentary machinery had hardly cleared the way for Canada's participation in the struggle when Valcartier Camp, Quebec, the training ground of her first



splendid Division, sprang from a wilderness into being. Of the miracles accomplished in planning and building the camp, and the unsurpassable organisation which made it possible, little need be said here, but the astonishing fact remains that entirely adequate accommodation for the housing and training of 35,000 men was completed in less than three weeks.

On August 24th, 1914, as soon as it became known that Canada's offer of men had been accepted by Great Britain, recruiting offices for the 10th Battalion were opened in Lethbridge, Edmonton, Calgary, and many other towns throughout Alberta. The response was instant and enthusiastic. Eager volunteers flocked to enrol in "Alberta's own Battalion," and practically every profession, trade and calling in the Province was represented in the first five hundred attestations.

In the latter end of September, the battalion was ordered to mobilise at Valcartier Camp, and its organisation and training was placed in the capable hands of Lieut.-Colonel R. L. Boyle. He at once systematised the battalion's affairs and placed its uncertain feet upon the path towards military efficiency. But there were many shufflings and rearrangements necessary before the "Tenth" took their place as a unit in Canada's first expeditionary force, for the composition of that force was not made known to the anxious commanding officer until the last moment before the troops sailed for England.

The 10th Battalion was assigned to an old but commodious and seaworthy vessel of the Allan Line, and shared quarters with the staff of No. 1 Canadian General Hospital.

Fortunately the inevitable discomforts of the journey were not accentuated by rough weather, and after eleven days of uneventful voyaging the fleet dropped anchor in Plymouth.

#### IN ENGLAND.

Of the weary, soul-trying months of training at Salisbury Plain, under weather conditions that were truly

appalling, and during which hundreds of men suffered from the dreaded spotted fever, and pneumonia, much has already been written. Few, however, can realise to what extent the endurance and fortitude of the men were tried by the every day conditions of camp life.

On October the 24th the "Tenth," with the other units of the Division, was inspected by that great soldier, the late Field Marshal Earl Roberts. It was his last public appearance in England. After the march past the Division was formed into a hollow square, around the saluting base, to be addressed by him. The victor of Kandahar displayed considerable emotion as he walked forward and faced the closely packed ranks of Canada's stalwarts. These quietly confident, muscular and finely trained volunteers, who had come three thousand miles to uphold Freedom and the Empire, impressed him deeply. They satisfied his professional eye and gave promise of great hitting power.

Lord Kitchener accompanied the King to the final "Royal Review," which took place on February the 4th. All eyes were focussed on England's greatest soldier, and each battalion was determined to surpass itself that day. Fortunately the weather, which had been threatening, cleared as the great hour approached, and when the battalions were massed and ready for inspection on Knighton Down, the sun shone fitfully through the clouds. The tall figure of Lord Kitchener, as he stood beside the King underneath the Royal Standard, held the breathless attention of the Canadians, and as the bands crashed forth the familiar regimental marches, the battalions swung off for the march past with the poise and assurance of veterans. The moment was epoch making. The men from far-off Canada, like Crusaders of old, were about to fare forth in defence of human liberty, and to pledge again in blood their loyalty to King and Empire.

Three days later, February 7th, 1915, the battalions of the 1st Brigade moved swiftly and silently from Salisbury Plain to the port of embarkation. The



10th Battalion, with other units of the 2nd Brigade, entrained on February the 10th, and boarded the transport the same day. The journey was expected to be a short one, and consequently as many men as was possible were crowded on to each transport. Every available inch of space was occupied, and the men of the "Tenth," with their fully packed equipment and rifles, had hardly room to turn round. To make matters worse, head winds and mountainous seas buffeted the transport from the moment she had left the protection of the estuary, and, with the other ships of the convoy, she wallowed in the Bay of Biscay for three days before she finally made port.

On the morning of the 15th of February the 10th Battalion disembarked. The men, many of whom had suffered severely from sea-sickness, were weary from the confinement and cramped quarters on ship-board, and the march to billets several miles outside the town, was a severe trial.

On the following day the battalion was marched to the entraining point from which they were to be taken to within striking distance of the firing line.

### THE ARRIVAL IN FRANCE—INCIDENTS.

Hazebruck, a fairly large town in Flanders and the journey's end, was reached at 7 a.m. on February 17th. The men of the 10th Battalion, though utterly weary and stiff from train cramp, tumbled out of the freight cars with alacrity, anticipating breakfast and a rest. Speculation was rife among them as to what sort of billets were to be expected, for Hazebruck looked decidedly promising. Comfortable looking hotels and restaurants seemed to be a feature of the town. Vain hopes blighted by imperative command to "Fall in."

The last mouthfuls of breakfast were hastily bolted, the men struggled into their equipment, and, almost before they realised it, Hazebruck was becoming a brief memory.



After two days' rest at Borre the battalion continued the march to the Ploegsteert area, and arrived at billets in Romarin on the afternoon of February 20th, which was to be their "home" for some time while undergoing the vitally necessary instruction in actual trench warfare.

"A" and "C" Companies were chosen for the first tour of duty in the "Plugstreet" trenches, and received their baptism of fire on the evening of February 22nd. Their trip into the line proved a revelation in more respects than one. The tenacious, icy-cold mud of the trenches, the evil odour of a much fought over battle ground, the necessity for keeping one's head down, and the constant, unfightable menace of high explosive shells and trench mortar bombs of frightful killing power, effectively crushed old imaginings about the romance and glamour of war. They found that this was a war of moles and machinery—a grubby, dirty war, in which picks and shovels were only of secondary importance to machine guns and artillery.

Despite the usual "strafings," incidental to trench routine, and indicative of Hunnish peevishness, the battalion suffered no casualties until February 25th, when "C" and "D" Companies were in the line. They had one man killed and two wounded. Two more casualties occurred before the "Tenth" was relieved on February 28th and under orders to move to the Armentieres Sector.

From the arrival of the battalion in Fleur Bais, a small village south of Armentieres, until the eve of Neuve Chapelle, Great Britain's first offensive action, and anxiously awaited test of the hitting power of the British Army, the men had nothing worse to endure than the monotonies of trench duty, working fatigue and labours inseparable from "rest billets," plus the never-to-be-avoided casualties.

Neuve Chapelle passed them by, and the "Tenth" watched the shuffling of the pawns in this great game of War Chess with wonder and envy—wonder at the

mightiness of the organisation involved in the movement of armies, and envy of those gallant battalions which were marching so cheerfully into the furnace of battle.

The Canadians, who were now considered to be "trench wise," were moved to a livelier part of the front. On March the 25th the 10th Battalion was one of the units that marched out of Romarin for Estaires. After a week's intensive training at Estaires the battalion, on the morning of April 14th, boarded a fleet of motor buses—the familiar vehicles of the London streets—and journeyed through peaceful Flemish countryside to Vlamertinghe, a pretty village directly west of Ypres and as yet untouched by war.

Leaving the buses at Vlamertinghe, the 10th Battalion took to the road and followed the moving stream of troops towards Ypres and the Salient. Their destination was Wieltje, and then the trenches—a new part of the line which our increasing strength permitted us to take over from the French Colonial troops, who had been holding it almost since the victorious, onrushing Huns had been brought to a standstill.

### THE SALIENT.

The relief was not effected until 4.30 a.m. on the morning of April 15th. The commanders of the French garrison made no secret of their joy at being relieved, but sought to console the Canadians by assuring them that this was a very quiet sector. A week later one of the most desperate and bloody battles of the war was fought over this very ground, and the heroic sacrifices made by the Canadians on this occasion rendered immortal the name of Ypres.

The trenches taken over by the 10th Battalion, roughly 1,500 yards of frontage, faced the German line, between and just south of, Polecappelle and Passchendaele. The front line was merely a name, being little more than a shallow ditch without parapet. There

were no dugouts or other shelters, and parts of the ditch was literally paved with German dead of an early vintage. Of barbed wire entanglements there was not even a vestige, and the only protective device consisted of smooth trip-wire, thinly strung, some distance in front of the place where the parapet should have been. Some of the men in making their way into the trench had come through this wire without being aware of its existence.

As soon as a thorough survey had been made by the officers of the "Tenth," steps were at once taken to strengthen the defences. Twenty-five hundred sand-bags were smuggled into the line, filled and put in place during the next twenty-four hours. The fire trench was cleaned, deepened, and made fit for occupation, the men working feverishly to get the gruesome job over as quickly as possible. This unwonted activity was not overlooked by the Hun artillery observers, and their guns endeavoured to interrupt operations with annoying persistency both day and night.

Major McLaren, Major Ormond, and Captain Gledden of the "Tenth" were riding along the Elverdinge Road toward Brielen on the afternoon of April 22nd when they saw rolling towards the British lines, behind the smoke of bursting shells, a dense cloud of yellowish-green vapour. It advanced slowly on the wings of the sluggish wind, crawling along the ground in heavy billows, unhurried and portentous.

They spurred their horses and galloped towards Ypres, chilled by a strange dread of the unknown phenomenon. They feared and hated this thing instinctively.

At Battalion H.Q. in Ypres, Lieut.-Colonel Boyle was holding a conference with his officers when Major McLaren and his companions arrived and reported. They could throw no light on the origin of the strangely smelling smoke which was now tainting the air, but it was certain that some offensive action was preparing under its cover.



## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES.

A hurried order from Brigade H.Q. was received at 5.20 p.m. notifying Colonel Boyle to have his battalion ready to move to the trenches at 6 p.m. The battalion paraded at the junction of the Ypres-St. Jean Road, but was at once swallowed up in the terrible confusion of men and transport which prevailed. Masses of wildly fleeing French Colonial troops surged on the roads and over the fields making towards Ypres and Vlamertinghe, many of them exhausted and gasping for breath, their faces twisted and distorted with pain. Asphyxiating gas of great intensity had been projected into their trenches, and thousands had been overcome before they abandoned the line. To add to the terror and confusion, the German guns had the range of the Cross Roads outside Ypres, and their thickly falling shells were snatching numerous victims from among the horror stricken refugees.

In order to extricate his battalion, Colonel Boyle had to split it up into small parties, and these proceeded independently to Wieltje.

At this time the position on the battle front was as follows : Three infantry brigades of the Canadian Division were holding about 5,000 yards of front line trenches, extending from the Ypres-Roulers Railway to the Ypres-Polecappelle Road. The French were on the left flank in touch with the 3rd Brigade, the 2nd Brigade was on the right, the 1st Brigade being held in reserve.

The enforced withdrawal of the French Colonial troops, which left a gap of nearly 1,000 yards in the line, gravely exposed the Canadians' left, making it possible for the Huns to break through and cut off the entire division. The situation was desperate.

The General Officer Commanding the Canadians decided upon a bold stroke. He withdrew his left flank southwards, protecting his rear and establishing a new front, and prepared to counter-attack upon St. Julien

Wood, which the Huns had captured, two miles in rear of the original French position.

Reinforcements had arrived—not a moment too soon. Two battalions of the 1st Brigade and one from the 2nd Brigade had been switched to the trenches in support of the 3rd Brigade. The “Tenth,” also of the 2nd Brigade, which we left on the way to Wieltje, was intercepted and diverted to the same ground. A counter-attack—a forlorn hope—was to be carried out immediately.

Darkness had fallen. A waning moon was faintly illuminating the murderous melee of the battlefield. The stabbing flashes of bursting German shells marked the Canadian position. German guns were trying to blast a pathway through for their infantry. Machine gun and rifle flashes flickered like a million fireflies in the gloom, and the swishing bullets flew literally in sheets over the broken ground and battered trenches where the 3rd Brigade was hanging on indomitably.

The forlorn hope, consisting of the 10th and the 16th (Canadian Scottish) Battalions, moved up rapidly to the attacking point, from which St. Julien Wood could be seen, looming up darkly in the faint moonlight, five hundred yards away.

### THE “TENTH” ATTACK.

The order to advance was given at 11.45 p.m. The “Tenth” led the way, the 16th following almost immediately behind; both battalions were moving forward in waves, each wave two companies strong. Although the ground was much cut up from shell fire, little noise was made by the marching men, upon whom the necessity for strict silence had been impressed.

More than two-thirds of the distance had been covered, and as yet they had not been discovered. Fifty yards from the fringe of the wood a hedge was unexpectedly encountered. There was nothing for it but to smash a way through. The snapping branches

aroused the enemy's sentries, and a murderous fire from rifles and machine guns was opened upon the "Tenth." Colonel Boyle, who was following behind the second wave, urged on his men. They were falling in two's and three's under the storm of lead, but they never wavered. Working frantically with rifle butts they burst through the hedge, cleared the intervening open space at a bound, and reached the first German trench at the wood's edge. This was bayoneted clear in five minutes. Without hesitation the 10th and the 16th clambered out of the trench and charged into the wood. Every tree-trunk sheltered a Hun rifleman, while machine guns enfiladed the approaches and open spaces with a withering fire. It seemed impossible that anything could live in that maelstrom of flying lead. But the Canadians, now thoroughly aroused, were not to be denied, and, fighting grimly with the bayonet every foot of the way, gradually drove their more numerous adversaries backward. **Hundreds of Germans** were eager to surrender. Their dead lay in heaps.

In the advance a party of the "Tenth" came upon the four naval guns which the Germans captured in their first irresistible rush. They had been rendered useless by the hastily retreating enemy.

Now the battalions were fighting side by side. Death had taken frightful toll of the 10th, and the men of the 16th had filled up the gaps in the first attacking lines. The Germans rallied their broken infantry and brought up more machine guns. The Canadians lost their formation. They fought singly and in small groups, pressing ever onwards. They advanced wherever the Germans were in numbers.

Unconsciously they had swerved somewhat to the right and were moving north-east through the wood, instead of swinging around by the south-west front as intended. Here, exhausted and caught by new blasts of enfilade rifle and machine gun fire, they were forced to dig themselves in. The position was untenable. Masses of artillery concentrated its fire upon the wood. Shrapnel and high explosive rattled and smashed



through the trees, creating indescribable chaos. Machine guns, concentrated in groups, chattered death at every moving thing. Withdrawal was inevitable—otherwise annihilation.

These Canadians had now been fighting a hand-to-hand death-struggle against unbelievable odds in men and guns for nearly three hours. They were badly stricken, but unbeaten. They would have gone forward to annihilation if ordered to do so; but fortunately the complete sacrifice was unnecessary, for their charge had accomplished its object.

The withdrawal was successfully carried out at 12.30 p.m. and a new line was constructed running along by the hedge which had impeded them in the original advance.

### ASTOUNDING HEROISM.

A reconnaissance was undertaken by Major Ormond to ascertain the position at the battalion's left flank, which rested near the south-west corner of the wood. The sound of rapid fire suggested that the enemy might be advancing from a new direction. His fears were not realized; but he found a party of men—thirty-four in all—of the 10th and 16th Battalions, holding a portion of the first German trench on the fringe of the wood and putting up a spirited fight against an enemy bombing and machine gun party which occupied an advanced redoubt some fifteen yards away. To ensure the safety of his main line this post would have to be destroyed.

Lieutenant Lowry, 10th Battalion, and ten men volunteered to enter the wood and attack the post from the flank; the remainder of the little force was to rush it as soon as the flanking party should open fire. The charge was made—and broken. Eighteen men fell as they clambered over the parapet, withered by machine gun fire. The flanking party was equally unlucky.

A cross trench was dug to cope with the fire from the hostile redoubt and to connect up with the old

German line, which Major Ormond found to be in fairly good condition and to contain many interesting trophies.

A German Colonel of infantry and several other wounded German officers lay among the stricken who littered the trench, and at least two regiments were identified through their dead—the 2nd Prussian Guards and 234th Regiment, Bavarians—crack Hun troops.

The Germans, angered at the occupation of this trench, showered explosives upon its devoted little garrison. They could bring fire to bear from three directions—and they did—a lashing concentration of shells, bombs, machine guns and rifles.

With the coming of dawn an effort was made to ascertain the exact location of some small parties which had become detached during the withdrawal from the wood.

It was found that a small composite force of the two battalions was holding about two hundred yards of German trench fringing the S.W. corner of the wood and to the left of the hedge line to which our main body had withdrawn. Working parties were detailed to connect the two positions. In the readjustment the 10th Battalion took over the left flank. A gap of about two hundred yards existed between the right of the 16th Battalion and the Divisional position now occupied by the 1st Reserve Brigade.

About this time it was discovered that the Germans were digging a trench to the right of our new position, which if finished and occupied in force would seriously jeopardise the entire line. Lieut.-Col. Boyle, who had been with his men in the thick of all the fighting, decided that the enemy must be driven out and the work destroyed.

The assault was made with splendid gallantry, despite the men's exhausted condition; but it never had a chance to succeed. Batteries of machine guns at short range "played like a watering pot," as one officer said, upon the small attacking force. Colonel Boyle, who was leading, fell mortally wounded. Major

MacLaren, the second in command, Major Ormond, the Adjutant, Major Lightfoot, and several other officers were also hit, and the rank and file suffered proportionately. The remnants fell back upon their trench, firing as they withdrew.

In six hours of fighting the battalion had lost in killed and wounded nineteen officers and nearly six hundred N.C.O.'s and men, out of a total strength of eight hundred and sixteen. The Tenth had indeed had its baptism of blood.

Major MacLaren, an exceptionally able and gallant officer, was killed by a shell while on the way to hospital.

Major Ormond, though severely wounded, refused to leave the field and took command of the battalion.

The daylight hours of April 23rd were spent in organising the defences and removing the wounded, many of whom lay in the open. Attempts to bring in the sufferers were met by hostile rifle fire; but despite this typically Hunnish act many were rescued. Those unfortunates who lay far out had to be left to their fate.

All day long the German guns pounded at the Canadian lines, attempting to crush out the defenders' marvellous spirit of resistance by sheer weight of metal.

As darkness approached patrols were sent into the wood to ascertain the lie of the German trenches, but their attempts to get into touch with the enemy outposts were swept to failure by heavy machine gun fire. One of these patrols discovered the positions of three of the 4.7 guns which the use of gas had enabled the enemy to capture. These guns were partially destroyed and literally buried with dead—Turcos, British and Germans. As it was impossible to move them, snipers were detailed to cover them, awaiting a favourable opportunity to get them safely away to our lines.

### A GRIM ORDEAL.

The second night of ordeal had come. Ammunition was exhausted, there were no surgical dressings or



stretchers with which to ease and transport the deplorably large numbers of wounded, and the emergency rations had been eaten by the hungry men long since. No one had had any water for hours. Machine guns were urgently needed to supplement the pitifully weak rifle strength, and it was equally necessary that telephonic communication should be established with Brigade H.Q.

Another attack by the enemy seemed imminent, signs of great activity being manifested in the hostile lines less than one hundred yards away.

After many perilous journeys to Brigade H.Q., Lieut. W. R. Critchley succeeded in obtaining some flares and a flare pistol, also a telephone. Machine guns could not be spared. S.Q.M.S. Haylett also got through with a meagre supply of rations, and at midnight the day's fast was broken. The men were suffering badly from thirst and the nerve strain of the continuous shelling. Many slept where they stood from sheer exhaustion, unmindful of the din of bursting shells and of death ever present in the droning shrapnel and flying bullets.

An alarm reached the battalion at 3 a.m., April 24th—the Germans were about to attack. Half an hour later the enemy's guns opened up a furious bombardment, and successive projections of gas could be seen rolling in dense waves towards the Canadian trenches some distance to the right. In the half-light of the early dawn the onlookers saw the pulsing walls of evil-looking vapour creep with grim certainty towards the flame-smeared trenches where helpless men crouched and defiantly awaited its breath of death.

A message was received from Brigade H.Q. ordering the 10th Battalion to move to a position on the Gravenstafel Ridge, in support of the 8th Battalion, which was being hard pressed. Arrangements were at once made with the 16th Battalion to extend their left. When the 10th was ready to move it was broad daylight and the sun's rim was just showing above the horizon. The only means of egress from the front line was by way of a recently dug, shallow trough barely

offering cover to prone men. It crossed a ridge exposed to German fire from three directions; yet by skilful handling the men were brought safely away without the enemy being aware of the movement.

After a tedious march the badly spent battalion, now only a hundred and fifty strong with three officers, reached support trenches on the slope of the Gravenstafel Ridge. Almost immediately an imperative call for help came from the 8th Battalion, which was defending the ridge to the N.E. of St. Julien. Extending into open order, the 10th Battalion scrambled up the slope, gathering many stragglers from other units on the way, and occupied a trench to the left of that held by small parties of the 8th and 7th Battalions.

The Germans seemed to be attacking all along the line, using artillery and gas unsparingly and then hurling masses of men upon the suffocating defenders. Time and time again the enemy threw his full force against the mauled trenches, but always his infantry staggered back beaten by mere handfuls of unconquerable Canadians.

Captain Arthur was now in command of the 10th Battalion, Major Ormond having been wounded again. The latter had displayed unusual resolution and resource in handling his sorely tried command.

The gas clouds gradually drifted towards the 10th Battalion trenches, blinding and choking the defenders, while the massed German guns sowed the ground with death-spreading high explosive and shrapnel. The battlefield was an inferno—a reeking shambles haunted with the groans of the dying.

### FIGHTING TO THE LAST.

There were now only 146 men and five officers—including many stragglers from other units—left to defend a long stretch of trench, yet the thought of retreat never seemed to have occurred to them. Under Captain Lowry's leadership they beat back several fierce

attacks in the next few hours. Who shall know the bodily and mental anguish which these Canadians endured during these awful hours of struggle, when the fate of Belgium and Calais hung by the fine golden thread of their valour?

The German guns never slackened in their efforts to blot out the Canadians, and Major Ormond records in his diary that his men were being blown out of the trench in groups, mutilated beyond recognition by the rending high explosive.

Towards 6 a.m. the enemy succeeded, by a series of short rushes, in working forward on the left of the 10th Battalion with machine guns. Our rifle fire was too weak to stop him. The greater part of our position was garrisoned now only by our dead and wounded. The survivors of the 10th Battalion were isolated. The position was hopeless.

At noon a runner reached Captain Lowry with an order to withdraw. It came not a moment too soon, for the enemy was massing for a final rush. The retirement was successfully carried out under the eyes of the enemy. By 1 p.m. all that was left of the 10th Battalion was safely entrenched in the new position in time to see the last round fired by the only British battery left in action. There was no more ammunition for the guns.

The battalion was exhausted by sixty hours of fierce and continuous fighting, but that night its remnants, together with those of the 7th Battalion, were ordered up to the support of an English regiment that was in difficulties, no other reinforcements being available. They moved up shortly after midnight, dug themselves in and sat tight while the German artillery sought methodically to wipe them out. They beat off a desperate attack which was delivered under the heaviest gun fire as dawn began to flush the East, though nearly every man was ill and suffering acutely from gas poisoning. With marvellous tenacity and spirit they maintained their positions throughout the day. They continued to hold on grimly throughout the bitter



fighting round Fortuin and St. Julien on April 27th and 28th, when the Germans, by sheer weight of men and guns, temporarily broke through.

On Monday morning, April 29th, the 100 worn-out men who remained of the battalion were relieved. They staggered to billets at Vlamertinghe.

The second battle of Ypres was over. The full might of German arms, estimated at four divisions with surplus artillery, had exhausted itself against the stubborn, immovable defence of men who could not realize when they were beaten. Canadian valour had marked an epoch in the history of British arms. Memories of the heroism of those citizen soldiers can never die while civilization endures.

### ANOTHER CALL.

But only a very short rest was vouchsafed to them. Lack of reserves again forced the burden of duty upon them, and on the last day of April they occupied the trenches on the Yser Canal to the north-west of Ypres. For nearly a week they held this portion of the line. The Germans battered ceaselessly at their defences and German aeroplanes, then absolute masters of the air, bombed them frequently.

The 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade was now attached to the 4th Imperial Corps and was transferred to the billeting area south-west of Bailleul on the evening of May 5th. A week was given it for rest and reorganisation in preparation for General Alderson's inspection on May 9th of the Canadian Division. "I have never been so proud of anything in my life as I am of my armlet with 'Canada' on it," he said. "I know my military history pretty well, but I cannot think of an instance, especially when the cleverness and determination of the enemy are taken into account, in which troops were placed in such a difficult position; nor can I think of an instance in which so much depended upon the standing fast of one division." Major P. C. Guthrie was now in

command of the battalion and led his men with skill and determination until wounded during the bitter fighting around K.5 redoubt.

The guns were already thundering a prelude to battle when the 10th Battalion took over the trenches at Rue L'Epinette, Festubert, on May 18th. The enemy, sensing preparations for attack, were trying by weight of metal to crush the movement in its inception. As a consequence the battalion suffered severely.

The German position facing the Canadians at Festubert was an exceptionally strong one. Besides the usual elaborate system of trench defences, the ground in front was scarred with water-logged ditches, and a terrific enfilade fire could be brought to bear upon all the approaches by groups of machine guns mounted in concrete redoubts.

### FESTUBERT.

One of these redoubts known as "K.5," dominated the left flank of the 10th Battalion's position, and the fire from its machine guns caused many casualties in our trenches. "K.5" had to be taken.

The co-operation of the artillery and some trench mortars was secured, and it was arranged that a slow but steady fire should be maintained upon the redoubt for several hours before the infantry should attempt to rush it. Only light guns were available, however, and these proved quite ineffectual, hardly damaging the solid defences—as the attackers found out later.

The battalion moved against the redoubt at dusk of May 20th. The way lay along a communication trench entirely unknown to either officers or men. Circumstances were completely against the success of the enterprise. The leading company came suddenly into plain view of the waiting enemy and was almost annihilated by machine gun fire. The attack stopped dead. Mounds of dead and dying lay to mark its failure. No men could win through alive against that steady stream of

leaden death. To avoid unnecessary losses Major Guthrie ordered withdrawal.

The Canadians were not to be beaten, however, and another attempt against "K.5" was planned for the following day. It was hoped that sufficient artillery support might be obtained.

For three and a half hours on May 21st our guns belaboured "K.5" and adjoining trenches, but the absence of "heavies" again minimised the effect of the bombardment. On this occasion the attack was to be pushed home from both flanks by two companies of the 10th Battalion, assisted by a grenade company from the 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade, under cover of night.

The left party following a trench route had to cover the last hundred yards of the advance across the open, exposed to an unheard-of concentration of machine gun fire. They were swept away like leaves in an autumn wind.

The right attacking party was more fortunate and succeeded in entering the enemy's line opposite "K.5," driving him back over four hundred yards. This trench was consolidated and held against several counter attacks made during the night.

As soon as dawn came the enemy, stung by the reverse of the previous evening, turned every available gun upon the captured position, and continued to smother it with high-explosive, practically without intermission, during the whole day. Part of the trench and its defenders were blown away. Huge gaps were torn in the parapet along its whole length. Wisdom indicated the abandonment of a portion of this shell-gashed sector which could no longer offer cover.

The men of the 10th Battalion and of the grenade company, by now a mere handful, were withdrawn, and another barricade was built across what remained to us of the captured line. Then two companies of German infantry attempted to rush the position; but this attack was smashed by artillery and machine gun fire.

When darkness again fell the 2nd Brigade was relieved. In these actions against "K.5" the battalion suffered



18 casualties among its officers and 250 among its other ranks.

The battalion went into billets at La Hamil. Here all ranks were issued with protecting devices against gas—nose and mouth protectors of crude gauze—and had the pleasure of welcoming Major Ormond, who returned to duty recovered from his wounds.

On the last day of May the battalion moved to Givenchy and took over the trenches facing La Bassee, south of the Canal, on June 2nd. The British legions were once more gathering to strike at the approaches to Lille from a different angle. The roar of the guns grew in violence daily as new batteries were brought into position, adding their voices to the chorus. Master minds were setting the stage for yet another drama—Givenchy.

While the 10th Battalion were occupying the canal trenches, Lt.-Col. J. G. Rattray arrived from England and took command. His arrival was fortunately timed—the lull before the storm—and he was able to form his first opinions and impressions under actual battle conditions, shorn of much of the usual confusing excitement.

During the battle of Givenchy, the 10th Battalion occupied trenches to the left of the battle area, and did not attack. They had merely to support the 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade units with sustained rifle and machine gun fire, while the latter attempted to carry some very important and strongly fortified positions successfully.

## FORMATION OF THE CORPS.

With the arrival of the 2nd Canadian Division in France early in September, came into being the Canadian Corps. Henceforward, the Canadians would be an army to themselves—a complete organisation directly under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief.

The coming of this 2nd Division necessitated many readjustments of position, and finally the Canadians took over the line from south of Wulverghem to Kemmel and St. Eloi—about five and a half miles of trenches.

This frontage was really excessive for two divisions to maintain. Had the Germans attempted a drive in force at this time, the position would have been alarming.

It was mid-October, and to the southward English and Germans were once more locked in death grips, at Loos. Already rumours of victory were reaching the Canadians, who were called upon to worry the enemy by feint attacks, and so keep him from sending reinforcements to his swaying divisions.

The 10th Battalion made a demonstration on October 13th, and succeeded in giving the Germans the impression that an attack was imminent. The weakness of the German reply to the Canadians' artillery and machine gun fire, disclosed the fact that his line was as thinly held as our own.

The wet weather had come, and with it the twin miseries of winter in Flanders—water-logged trenches and bitterly cold winds. The River Douve, which crossed the trench lines overflowed its banks frequently, and to the men splashing day and night in the waist-deep water, the six day trench "tours" seemed like an eternity. However, on November 25th, the 10th Battalion were relieved and transferred to Bailleul for training and reorganisation—training that was even kindly regarded by the men haunted by dreams of the River Douve.

The 10th Battalion spent Christmas Day, 1915, in billets which dawned with lowering skies, heavy with unshed rain. The light of day came slowly over the sodden fields, disclosing an endless vista of dripping trees and hedgerows and shell-wrecked farm-houses that had come within the sweep of war. The mist-laden air throbbed with the sullen rumblings of the never-resting guns. A great sorrow seemed to brood over the land.

The 10th Battalion tried hard to make the day cheerful. There were plum puddings, fruit and cigars to add savour to the mid-day meal, and singing and general jollification until dark. Then the men detailed for working parties assembled on the muddy roads outside the cheerful billets and marched off into the murky night to labour in the trenches until dawn.

During the "rest" period at Bulford Camp in the first week of 1916, the 10th Battalion rehearsed over practise trenches for a contemplated raid on the German lines. These raids, which originated with the Canadians, had become an established phase of trench warfare. They were not merely spasmodic efforts to punish the enemy. They had a threefold purpose—to secure identification of enemy units, to test the strength of his defences and worry him, and, most important of all, to break the monotony and soul-numbing misery of trench fighting.

Unfavourable weather held up the 10th Battalion's plans until the night of February 4/5th. Briefly, the objects of the raid were: to smash up an enemy strong point, putting its machine guns out of action, capture prisoners for identification purposes, and by the infliction of heavy casualties to demoralise his garrisons. \*

### A SUCCESSFUL RAID.

The wire-cutting party left the Canadian lines at 6.30 a.m., and the last strand of German wire fell apart from the cutters at 2.30 p.m.—eight hours of the most fatiguing, persistent and dangerous toil.

The raiders in three groups made their way safely through the gap only to find that a large German working party, protected by a strong covering patrol, had commenced repairing the parapets. Surprise was impossible. The decision of a whispered council was that the raiders should wait ten minutes, and if then the working party had not dispersed, they would rush them to kill and capture as many as possible.

The rain had ceased and dawn was approaching. Every wasted minute piled on chances against success. The luck of the 10th Battalion failed them. A strong German patrol returning to their trenches blundered into the raiders almost before they were aware of it. The raiders sprang upon them and the groups became locked in a fierce death grapple. Men killed as best they



might in the impenetrable gloom. Bombs, bayonets and knob-kerries were used as the swaying bodies permitted, and the struggling men rolled in the barbed wire clutching at each other's throats, reverting to the primal instinct to kill with the hands, neither giving or expecting quarter.

The nervous Germans manning the front line joined in the melee, firing into and bombing friend and foe indiscriminately. The Hun patrol was put out of action to a man, and then before retiring, the raiders bombed the front line liberally and with precision.

It was estimated that at least fifty Germans had been accounted for—their patrol had been wiped out, their heavily manned front line bombed, and later swept accurately with high explosive by the Canadian artillery, which covered the raiders' retirement with curtains of fire. The 10th's losses were : 4 killed and 15 wounded, including one officer.

The fame of the Canadian raiders was growing apace; the French Army was anxious to study their methods. Lieutenant Dallenes, 26th Battalion, Chasseurs au Pied was detailed to remain with 10th Battalion for instructional purposes.

The new Army of Canada was teaching the old armies of Europe war, modernized to the last minute.

Varying fortunes favoured the 10th Battalion throughout the months of March, April and May, during which they occupied the trenches at Hill 60, and established complete ascendancy over the enemy patrols, which were pinned to the trenches by the relentless aggressiveness of the Canadians.

Brilliant sunshine and cloudless skies ushered in the month of June—a most fateful month for the Canadians, bringing as it did a serious reverse more costly in casualties than Ypres.

### SANCTUARY WOOD.

It was about 10 a.m. on June 2nd when the German preliminary bombardment of the Canadian position

burst with the suddenness of a summer thunderstorm. A terrific drumfire of mixed shrapnel and high explosive swept over Hill 60, Mont Sorrel and Observatory Wood—the right apex of the Salient—isolating the sector absolutely. Warfare had never witnessed such a stupendous concentration of gunfire. Storms of explosives rolled over the Canadian front and support lines with hurricane force and more than a hurricane destructiveness, wrecking position after position with ghastly thoroughness.

At 1 p.m. the German infantry emerged from their trenches and trotted over the scarred, shell-tossed earth where three hours previously had been well-built trenches manned by the best blood of Canada. They met with no resistance.

The 10th Battalion in the Brigade Reserve when the storm broke was at once ordered up to Mont Sorrel support lines in Armagh Wood, to assist the 7th Battalion, which was about to counter attack. After a hard day's fighting under frightful shell fire the 10th Battalion was pulled out, but were back again in the Hill 60 trenches on June 6th. This part of the line was very badly smashed up and offered practically no protection to the defenders. The work of improving the trenches had to be carried out under extremely heavy fire, and casualties were severe. The 10th Battalion had to suffer without being given the longed-for chance to come to grips with the enemy.

A determined, not-to-be-denied, counter-thrust was launched by the Canadians on the night of June 13th-14th, which completely restored the Mont Sorrel-Observatory Ridge position, inflicting heavy casualties upon the enemy and resulting in the capture of some hundred prisoners. The 10th Battalion relieved the 16th Battalion immediately following the advance and succeeded in consolidating the position in the face of the most determined opposition.

The Battalion made the average number of trench tours during July and August, much time being spent in re-organising and re-fitting the men for the move to

the Somme, which took place on August 28th, 1916.

On September 10th, the 10th Battalion, rested somewhat after the long and tiresome journey from Flanders, took over the trenches opposite Moquet Farm of evil memory. The Germans, seemingly aware of the change of garrisons, at once began to harass the newcomers—to test their mettle and establish their identity. Five times during the night they tried to rush the 10th Battalion, but these seasoned fighters, watchful of every move, broke up their formations quickly and completely.

### THE 10TH BATTALION AT THE SOMME.

Following the successful action at Courcellette on September 15th-16th, when the 2nd Canadian Division smashed through the German lines, capturing the village and several thousands of prisoners, the 10th Battalion was warned to prepare for action. The gains were to be extended. The “Zollern Redoubt,” “Stuff Redoubt,” and the “Hessian” trench system, protecting the German positions from the left of Courcellette, almost to Thiepval—considered by the enemy to be almost impregnable—had been marked out for attack and capture.

The task was entrusted to the 2nd Brigade, 5th, 8th and 10th Battalions, the latter supporting the attack with two companies on each flank. The advance was timed to coincide with the final British assault against Thiepval, and took place in the last days of September. After several hours' intensive bombardment of the enemy's position, the attacking Battalions in four waves left the “jumping off” trench under cover of a heavy shrapnel barrage. They were met by withering blasts of machine gun fire, which seemed to come from all directions at once, strewing their advance with dead and wounded. The supporting waves filled up the gaps and the lines never even wavered, though they had to move at a walk owing to the terrible state of the ground, pulverised by shell fire. Although the “Zollern” trench



had been reduced to tatters by our artillery, isolated groups with machine guns fought until the Canadians were on top of them, and desperate hand to hand fighting ensued. Parties of the 10th Battalion remained in the trench to "mop up," and many prisoners were gathered in. German dead, mangled by high explosive, lay in heaps.

With hardly a pause the attacking waves surged towards the "Hessian" trench, a ghastly shambles of dead and maimed, pitted and smashed by shell fire—save the deep dug-outs which hid many Huns. Five minutes with bayonet and bomb completed its capture.

Red flares from the German supports notified their artillery of the Canadian advance, and their guns drenched the position with high explosive. But the Canadians had come to stay; old scores were being evened up.

Small groups of the 10th, 5th and 8th, survivors of three full battalions, worked feverishly to patch up the ruined defences, anticipating the inevitable counter-attack. It came, masked by an artillery barrage, and the concentrated fire of numerous machine guns enfilading from the "Zollern" and Stuff Redoubts." The "Hessian" trench was again in German hands—but only for a few moments. Advancing through a perfect hell of fire, the 7th Battalion fell upon the enemy and annihilated his storming party. "Hessian" trench was then consolidated and held.

On the morning of September 28th, the 10th Battalion was relieved. Its trophies were: Prisoners, six officers, 116 other ranks, four machine guns, a large quantity of bombs, ammunition, rifles, and equipment. Its losses were: Ten officers and 320 N.C.O.'s and men.

After two more "tours" of trench duty the 10th Battalion moved to Montrelet for rest and re-organisation, and on October 2nd began the march to the Lens-Vimy Sector. Carency and the Souchez area was reached on November 2nd, and the battalion moved into the trenches two days later.

The month of December passed without noteworthy

event, and the 10th Battalion was fortunate enough to be in Corps Reserve when Christmas Day came around once more. A real Christmas dinner was provided for them on this occasion, the officers sitting down with the men and taking part in the rollicking smoking concert which followed in a Y.M.C.A. hut.

The last week of 1916 was spent in Corps Reserve training and re-organising grenade and machine gun sections. Few men of the "Old Tenth" which came to France in the memorable February of 1915 were now left, but the glorious record which they bequeathed was safe in the keeping of those who came after, imbued as they were by sublime "esprit de corps."

During the greater part of January the 10th Battalion in Corps Reserve were rehearsed in attack according to the new system adopted throughout the British Army. The men were familiarised with the German trench systems by means of taped representations worked out from aeroplane photographs.

## PREPARATIONS FOR VIMY.

In mid-March the Battalion moved into the Labyrinth sector—plans were maturing for a great attack on Vimy Ridge. The weather had resumed its "frightfulness" and seemed to preclude the possibility of action, but tremendous offensives involving armies cannot wait upon weather. Too much depends upon the secret massing of men—the element of surprise—which cannot be concealed for long from the eyes of the modern armies—balloons and aeroplanes.

The 10th Battalion took part in the scheme of preliminary reconnaissances and raided the enemy lines during the last hours of April 8th. The operations took but an hour, and despite the most desperate opposition, all objectives were reached. Immense damage was done to permanent works, and eleven prisoners were captured, besides many secret documents, which proved invaluable to the General Staff.

Information regarding the enemy's strength and dispositions was now adequate, and preparations were rapidly completed for the assault on Vimy Ridge—one of the strongest bulwarks of the German defences on the Western front. This honour was to be conferred upon the Canadians.

There was really nothing new in the Canadian system of attack beyond a perfect application of the artillery barrage. Every movement of each attacking unit was to be covered by protective shell curtains, timed to advance in front of the troops with mathematical precision. The rest was left to the valour of the men, in whom the Higher Command placed absolute confidence, born of well-tried experience.

### THE ATTACK.

Lieut.-Col. D. M. Ormond was now commanding the 10th Battalion. They were to operate on the left flank of the 2nd Brigade, whose objective was the Arras-Lens Railway, well over the Ridge itself. The general advance was timed for 5.30 a.m., April 9th. As the dawn began to streak the sky with shafts of light, a snow-storm raged over the battlefield, covering the ground in a thin mantle of white. To the second of time the British artillery barrage opened up, descending like a wall of flame-riven smoke upon the German front line crowning the Ridge. The thunder of the guns was deafening, all-pervading, and the whine of the speeding shells merged into a crescendo of shrieking whistles as the guns, big and little, settled down to their work.

S.O.S. rockets hovered in showers above the enemy lines, and his guns answered these frantic appeals for help with a scattered ill-directed barrage, much less effective than the fire maintained by his machine guns and snipers. British counter-battery work was stifling the German gunfire.

The 10th Battalion left the "jumping-off" trench im-



mediately the signal was given, and trudged through the muddy shell craters after the barrage, stolidly and imperturbably, indifferent to the bullets which sang and hummed through the shell-smoke like hiving bees. Men crumpled up and fell into the water-filled craters right and left, but the advance continued relentlessly.

At 6.30 a.m. the first objective, the German front line, was reached. Gun crews still fought their weapons and snipers lying in the broken ground were still firing from hot rifles as fast as they could load. "Mopping up" parties systematically cleared the dug-outs, and scores of prisoners were herded towards the Canadian lines. German dead in blood-spattered heaps blocked the trench ways.

The 10th Battalion with only one officer left, continued the advance towards the enemy's second line, encountering the same form of opposition—machine guns and snipers. The Hun had modified his method of warfare. His infantry could no longer be depended upon to cross bayonets with the British. His principal defence now consisted of picked machine gun crews and snipers, either forced or sworn to fight to the last. Many were found chained to their guns.

Shortly after 9.0 a.m. the 10th Battalion reached its second and final objective. Messy work with the bayonet and bomb quickly stifled the opposition, and in an incredibly short time the second herd of erstwhile fighting Bavarians were running eagerly towards the safety and hospitality of the Canadian lines. They were unfeignedly glad to be out of it, and required no escorts.

The advance to the railway line was continued by supporting battalions, while the 10th Battalion settled down to consolidate the captured positions. They had suffered very severely and the men were exhausted from the heavy "going," but they turned to with a will proud in the knowledge that they had borne a good part in the taking of Vimy Ridge.

## AFTERMATH.

During the ensuing day the advance was continued by the Canadians, who drove the Germans from a large section of territory beyond the Lens-Arras Railway, almost to Willerval. The 10th Battalion supported in all these movements, and finally took up a line running from Farbus Wood for several hundred yards along the railway line. For many days the weather rang the changes on every variation of winter, bringing untold hardships and misery to the Canadians, who had to hang on to the semi-destroyed positions, littered with unburied dead and the foul from the debris of battle, always knee-deep in the icy cold mud and under heavy shell fire.

The 10th Battalion were not relieved until April 21st, when they marched out to billets at Mont St. Eloi, a sad remnant of the splendid battalion that left the "jumping-off" trench on the morning of April 9th.

The "Arleux Loop," an intricate system of trench fortifications enmeshing the village of Arleux-en-Gohelle, was next marked out for assault, and the taking of the village itself was allotted to the 2nd Brigade. The Arleux ruins bolstered up with concrete, encircled with deep belts of wire and pitfalls, and protected by countless machine guns, should have been impregnable, according to German calculations. All these horrors failed, however, to keep back the 5th, 8th and 10th Battalions when they attacked at midnight, April 27th-28th. They drove the Germans foot by foot from every hidden fort and shelter by sheer fighting ability. Desperate hand to hand battles were fought by small groups and individuals as the men ferreted among the cellars and ruins, clearing out the cornered Huns. Arleux was won and the Canadians pushed on rapidly and established themselves in the wood beyond, leaving behind in each battered gun emplacement little mounds of dead—the picked men of the German Army.

The 10th Battalion was relieved on the night of April

29th-30th, and marched wearily to billets in Mont St. Eloi, but here luck dealt hardly with the resting men. The Germans, enraged by their defeat, brought up heavy naval guns mounted on railway trucks, and on May 1st began the systematic bombardment of the billeting area, causing many casualties.

A move to the Loos-Lens sector in mid-July presaged further fighting. The 10th Battalion took over trenches facing Lens, north of Cite St. Emile-Lens, a mining town surrounded by a ring of tributary villages and bulwarks of slag, each of which had been fortified to the last degree, was to be the objective of a series of actions.

### FIGHTING AT "HILL 70."

The taking of Hill 70 in this scheme was allotted to the 1st Canadian Division, and the 2nd Brigade was chosen for the assaulting position on the right. The 10th Battalion was to have a place of honour with the first attacking waves.

At 6 a.m., August 15th, after adequate preliminary bombardments had cleared away the tangles of wire and wrecked the defences, the 10th Battalion left the "jumping-off" trench and advanced steadily in the face of heavy shelling and machine gun fire. The men moved forward in four waves hugging the barrage as closely as safety permitted, and swarmed over the German front line with irresistible dash.

As usual the machine gun crews fought to the last gasp, but the bayonets of the Canadians were irresistible, and the trench was soon cleared. A few minutes later the reformed waves of men were trudging stolidly towards their second objective. Slightly more trouble was experienced by the 10th Battalion on this occasion. This trench had escaped, miraculously it would seem, from the effects of the barrage, and the defenders proved to be in greater numbers than the Canadians. However, this did not deter the men of the 10th Battalion, and



the garrison was accounted for in very short time—the Germans surrendering with eager enthusiasm.

This should have ended the day's fighting for the 10th Battalion, but some of the other units of the Brigade, getting into difficulties, required help. The 10th was hurried forward and assisted them in carrying several trench elements.

### THE SLAUGHTER OF THE "CHALK PIT."

The action was continued on the following day, the objective being a heavily fortified position known as the "Chalk Pit," which occupied a commanding rise and could enfilade trenches either to the right or left. The British barrage opened upon this position at 4.0 p.m., and as the screen of shells fell over and around it the 10th Battalion left the "jumping-off" place and commenced the two hundred yards trudge across the open.

As usual the German machine guns and snipers sought to bar the way with violent gusts of rapid fire, which formed a veritable lace-work of bullets, which it would seem impossible for any living thing to brave. Men dropped rapidly, and when twenty-one minutes later the leading files swept over the lip of the "Chalk Pit" and fell upon the cornered Germans, they were outnumbered. Nothing, however, could stop the determined Canadians, and after a series of the most desperate hand-to-hand fights, in which bombs and bayonets were used with frightful effect, the position was won. "Mopping up" parties at once commenced to clear the dug-outs, which yielded many prisoners and a surprise—two of them had been mined and were wrecked by explosions, fortunately before the men of the 10th Battalion had begun their search.

The consolidation of the position was rendered extremely difficult owing to the particularly heavy machine gun and shell fire which the Hun, who had the Pit registered to a yard, rained upon it. Repairs were nevertheless effected, and a chain of strong outposts was

advanced as a measure against surprise. During the day and evening several determined counter-attacks were pushed forward by the Germans. Their men advanced in dense masses only to be sent reeling back shattered by rapid rifle and Lewis gun fire.

The 10th Battalion was relieved on the morning of April 18th, and returned to their billets at Les Brebis weary and broken, having lost one officer and 42 men killed, 10 officers and 249 men wounded, besides 56 missing and 36 suffering from gas poisoning.

Their trophies included 26 machine guns, quantities of small arms and ammunition, two bomb-throwers, and 225 prisoners.

Some days afterwards the Battalion, somewhat recovered, was marched to Corps Reserve, for very necessary re-organisation, and to receive the congratulations of the Army Commander, proud of their accomplishment. They had aided materially in the capture of one of the strongest and most important positions on the Western front, and had fought with superb courage and endurance against heavy odds.

Throughout October and the early days of November the 10th Battalion was kept on the move, and incidentally spent weeks in training, re-equipping and re-organising. As a result when orders came for the transfer of the 1st Division to the Passchendaele sector, on November 7th, the battalion was fit, ready and eager to meet the Hun, who was then striving desperately to hold back the British armies.

### AT PASSCHENDAELE.

The series of battles that marked the British advance at Passchendaele have been described by experts as the sternest struggles of the whole war. The Hun, perched on the high ground—the Passchendaele Ridge—had brought all his vast resources into play to transform a naturally strong defensive position into an unassailable

bastion. Concrete "Pill-boxes" bristling with machine guns covered all the approaches, from behind belt after belt of deep wire entanglements. Marshes and bog land stretched almost across the entire front, which the winter rains had converted into a sea of mud, waist deep in many places. His artillery had registered every inch of the slimy waste—countless guns directed by perfect observation.

Yet on October 26th the Canadians, British and Australian troops with unbelievable daring attacked, and by sheer valour and unheard of endurance drove the enemy back inch by inch. When the 10th Battalion moved into supports on November 10th, the enemy were holding with grim tenacity their last line of defences on the Ridge.

At 6.30 p.m. the 7th and 8th Battalions, holding the trenches facing Venture Farm and Vindictive Cross Roads, were reported to be in difficulties. "A" Company of the 10th Battalion were ordered forward to support them. Passing through heavy enemy barrage fire which punished them severely, they reached the front line on the 8th Battalion's left flank. Through some misunderstanding the 8th Battalion, believing that relief had come, moved out. A most serious situation resulted. The commanding officer of the 10th Battalion faced the situation squarely, readjusted his line in the face of tremendous obstacles, and became responsible for the entire frontage previously held by the 7th and 8th Battalions.

Here through the critical day of November 11th the 10th Battalion stuck grimly to their task, beat off numerous counter-attacks, and secured touch with the flanking troops—a most meritorious performance. At 9.15 p.m. they were relieved and marched to billets at Wieltje, tired and plastered with mud, but happy in the knowledge that they had earned another "Well done, 10th" from the Divisional Commander.



## “ ENVOI.”

Military necessity forbids that we should accompany the 10th Battalion further along the roads to sacrifice, which they have since so bravely trod. We must now say “ Good luck !” to this gallant Battalion, trudging so cheerfully and with such wonderful faith towards and through the furnace of war to final victory.







